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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3739th meeting of the Security Council, held on 7 February 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the progress report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan of 21 January 1997 (S/1997/56), submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1089 (1996) of 13 December 1996.

"The Security Council welcomes the signing in Moscow on 23 December 1996 by the President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition of the Agreement (S/1996/1070, annex I), including the Protocol on the Commission on National Reconciliation (S/1996/1070, annex II), and notes the progress made in the inter-Tajik talks in Tehran, in particular the signing of the Protocol on Refugees (S/1997/56, annex III). It believes that these agreements, provided they are carried out as written, represent a qualitative change for the better and give a new impetus to efforts aimed at achieving national reconciliation. The Council urges the parties to honour and implement consistently and in good faith the agreements already reached, in particular in the course of negotiating future agreements. It also urges them to make further substantive progress at the next rounds of the inter-Tajik talks.

"The Security Council notes with satisfaction that the ceasefire has been generally observed by the parties since December 1996 and calls on them to maintain it scrupulously for the whole duration of the inter-Tajik talks in accordance with their obligations and commitments.

"The Security Council commends the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and calls upon the parties to cooperate fully with him in continuing the inter-Tajik talks. The Security Council also commends the efforts of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) in fulfilling its mandate.

"The Security Council calls upon the parties to ensure the safety and the freedom of movement of the personnel of the United Nations, the collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and other international personnel in Tajikistan.

"The Security Council strongly condemns the attacks on and kidnapping of international personnel, in particular UNMOT, UNHCR and ICRC, and others and demands the immediate release of all those taken hostage. It stresses the inadmissibility of kidnapping and any other mistreatment of United Nations personnel and supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to ensure that the essential security requirements of UNMOT are met.

"In this context the Security Council expresses satisfaction at the efforts by and cooperation between UNMOT, the Russian Federation and the parties to resolve the hostage crisis.

"The Security Council considers it necessary for the United Nations to continue vigorous support for the political process in Tajikistan. It takes note of the request from the parties to UNMOT to extend the necessary assistance in the implementation of the Moscow Agreement and to cooperate closely with the Commission on National Reconciliation in its activities. The Council accepts the Secretary-General's recommendation not to change the nature and size of the United Nations presence in Tajikistan at this stage. It requests the Secretary-General to keep the situation under review and to submit in due course his recommendations with regard to the United Nations presence in Tajikistan in the light of the progress in implementation of the inter-Tajik agreements and bearing in mind the request for assistance by the parties contained in the Moscow Agreement and the tasks and functions that would be required to provide such assistance.

"The Security Council expresses deep concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Tajikistan and calls for continuing emergency relief including assistance for the return of refugees, in the context of the implementation of the Protocol on Refugees, and support to Tajikistan for rehabilitation, aimed at mitigation of the consequences of the war and reconstruction of its economy."